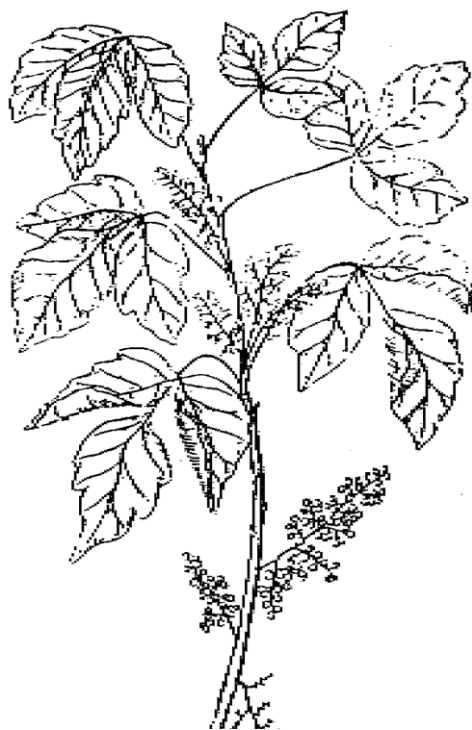


BEWARE POISON IVY

(*Toxicodendron radicans*)



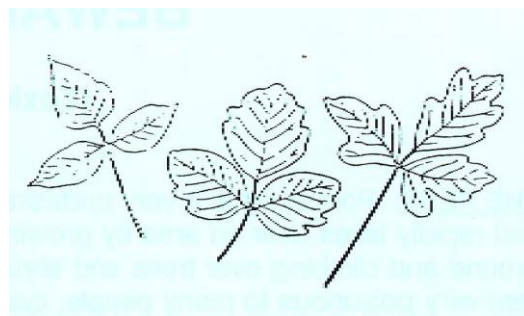
DESCRIPTION:

Poison ivy is an undesirable native weed that grows over the ground and can climb trees and shrubs. A skin rash can result from direct contact with any part of a poison ivy plant or from exposure to the smoke from burning poison ivy plants. You do not get a rash from looking at the plant nor does the rash reoccur unless there is actual contact with the plant or sap of the plant.

IDENTIFICATION:

Recognition of poison ivy is at times difficult because this is one of our most variable plants. The leaves, borne alternately along the stem, consist of three leaflets attached to a short leaf stalk, very similar to numerous other wild plants.

The individual leaflets may be smooth on the margin or they may have several large teeth or small lobes; the leaf margin is never sharply toothed or jagged.



The stems of poison ivy are also variable. At times, the stems trail over the ground, partially hidden by the grass or weeds, but more typically, the stems “climb” rock walls, fences, or the trunks of trees.

Perhaps the easiest way to recognize poison ivy, if you are unfamiliar with the leaves, is to check the climbing stems: these parts are covered with hundreds of small, brown/rust-colored aerial roots by which the stems cling to supporting walls or trees. In late season, poison ivy may be recognized by clusters of dull white or lead-gray berries scattered along the branches and stems.

MANAGEMENT:

Once established, poison ivy persists and spreads by means of its creeping stems and rootstocks. An effective method of eradication should destroy both the foliage and roots, either directly or indirectly. Which of the suggested control methods will be most useful depends in part on the circumstances under which the poison ivy is growing. In any treatment, parts of plants may be missed. Watch the area carefully and repeat the treatment if you observe any new growth.

Poison ivy may be uprooted by pulling it out of the ground when the soil has been softened by freezing and thawing in spring, usually in March. Obviously, all precautions and great care must be taken to insure that the skin does not come in contact with the poisonous principal, either directly or from clothing or tools. A person who knows he is quite sensitive to poison ivy should not attempt this means of control. Poison ivy pulled out in this fashion should be disposed of carefully so not further contact is possible. In an area that can be plowed, poison ivy may be effectively controlled by close mowing followed by plowing. It may be necessary to repeat the plowing or to follow it with a cultivated crop to kill and starve out the pieces of stem and root that are buried in the process. Repeated mowing will also eventually kill the poison ivy.

The non-selective herbicide glyphosate can be used to control/kill poison ivy according to label instructions. Treatments should be made during the summer. (Many people have “caught” poison ivy from dead poison ivy plants. It usually takes one to two years before the toxic oils dissipate).

Pesticide recommendations obtained from 2005-06 Guide to Pest Management Around the Home”, Miscellaneous Bulletin 74, a Cornell University Cooperative Extension publication.

4/91; slight revision 6/93; reviewed 9/04, 12/05

This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold, or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension specialist or our regional DEC office. Read the label before applying any pesticide.

FS 2906